

Traffic controllers keep satellites safe

By Lynn Gonzales

Air Force Space Command Public Affairs

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — A bullet fired on earth travels 2,700 miles per hour and can do damage for up to 1,000 yards before it stops. A loose bolt in space hits at 17,000 miles per hour, goes through a spacecraft and keeps going.

It's one office's job to make sure such a catastrophe doesn't happen.

One of the Air Force Space Command Space Safety Office's missions is to keep satellites away from the more than 9,000 pieces of space debris and dead satellites flying around the Earth. If they fail, space assets worth millions join the belt of worthless debris that surround the Earth.

"Some areas of concern are collision avoidance, radio frequency interference, solar flares, Leonids [meteors], space debris and end-of-life 'safing' [making sure the satellite has a safe and passive afterlife in space]," said Lt Col Ed Browne,

chief of space safety for Air Force Space Command. "Each one presents a huge risk to our space assets."

Collision avoidance, also called COLA, is one of orbital safety's primary concerns. A collision can disrupt or destroy communications, navigation and weather information.

While air traffic controllers must keep in radio contact with pilots to maintain safe separation, orbital safety officers must monitor the satellites, planning maneuvers through space riddled with thousands of objects.

Satellites are not only a target for visible debris but also for invisible intruders. Radio frequency interference can block commands used to adjust a satellite's path from the ground. If it can't get commands telling it to get out of some debris' way, there could be a collision. Air Force space operations squadrons, which operate satellites, are required to have an orbital safety program headed by an orbital safety officer.

In AFSPC, squadrons in the 21st and 50th Space wings at Peterson and Schriever Air Force bases, Colo., maintain programs that oversee collision avoidance, review safety procedures and limit space debris.

"Due to the importance of current and future military operations and on-orbit assets, operations crews, maintainers and monitors must have an active and engaging safety program to protect space assets," said Maj Paul Mejasich, the chief of orbital safety for the Air Force Safety Center at the Pentagon. "A robust Air Force space program requires a proactive safety program which can identify and mitigate space hazards, prevent mishaps during development, testing, evaluation, and space operations; and enhance the growing safe use of space products and tools by the joint warfighter."

In the time it took to read this article, thousands of objects orbiting up to 22,000 miles above the Earth passed overhead. Orbital safety officers made sure they flew by each other without incident.

INSPECT

Continued from Page 1

By 2d Lt Shannon Nyberg

Public affairs office

Everyone at Team Malmstrom has been preparing for the upcoming three phase Nuclear Surety, Operational Readiness and Compliance inspections from Monday through June 25 in an effort to show that the wing is well prepared to accomplish its mission.

The inspection will give the wing an opportunity to show the Air Force why it is Wing One and demonstrate how the wing it better than anybody, said Lt Col Rodney Jackson, chief of plans and programs. "It's showtime."

The Nuclear Surety Inspection, required every 18 months, will take place during the first four or five days of the inspection, and will ensure the wing can safely operate and maintain its nuclear capabilities.

The Operational Readiness Inspection will test the wing's ability to generate its missile force to alert status and look at how it operate when asked to deploy forces and support conventional war fighting operations.

During the ORI, both the deployment and employment phase of operations will be looked at as the wing demonstrate warfighting competency. The wing will

demonstrate its ability to do basic task skills such as establish patrols, repair runways and account for personnel in the field as well as personal competency in such areas as self aid and buddy care.

During the Ability to Survive and Operate or ATSO phase of the ORI, the wing will demonstrate its ability to accomplish the mission under stressful conditions as well as its ability to recover and, most importantly, take care of its injured. Areas to be looked at during this phase include search and recovery operations and hazardous spill clean up.

The third phase of the inspection, the Compliance Inspection, looks at the 341st's ability to comply with federally mandated items, common core criteria and special-interest items.

Environmental laws, intelligence programs, and transition assistance programs and the wing's ability to comply with the laws regarding those programs will be looked at. Communication and computer systems will also be inspected as the wing demonstrates that it has the proper protec-

tion for its software and have employed anti-virus and firewall defenses against outside threats to critical C4 systems.

The wing can expect the inspection to primarily focus on Common Core Criteria.

Specifically, the 341st can expect its commander support staffs to be looked at with the leave programs, weight management programs, unfavorable information files and family care programs being closely inspected. The wing's safety program management and implementation will also be examined to guarantee it is properly administering, and complying with mandated federal and Air Force safety standards.

The specialty interest items to be inspected are force protection and anti-terrorism program implementation, confined spaces management program, and lead-based paint disclosure program.

The wing has been preparing very hard for the past 90 days by going over checklists and making sure any open problems



Senior executive appraisal system adopts new look in July

The Air Force senior executive service performance appraisal system is slated to change July 1 to comply with new U.S. Office of Personnel Management regulations.

The new system changes the focus of SES performance management from process to results.

The changes are designed to help agencies hold senior executives accountable by:

- Reinforcing the link between performance management and strategic planning.
- Requiring agencies to use balanced

measures in evaluating executive performance, and

□ Giving agencies more flexibility to tailor performance management systems to unique mission requirements and organizational climates.

Several of the new requirements had already been practiced by the Air Force — the link to strategic planning, for example — but some changes were needed to obtain tighter focus on results, closer linkage of individual accomplishments to

the organization's strategic plan and incorporation of balanced measures into the appraisal. As used in OPM's performance appraisal regulations, balanced measures cover such things as organizational results, customer satisfaction and employee perspectives.

The Air Force Senior Executive Matters Office drafted revised senior executive service performance appraisal guidelines, with input from the Air Force Executive Resources Board Development



U.S. AIR FORCE

Stamp ceremony honors veterans



GREAT FALLS — Military veterans from Great Falls and surrounding areas are being honored by the U.S. Postal Service with a new commemorative postage stamp dedication ceremony at 10 a.m. today at Lions Park.

Great Falls Postmaster William Farrell is hosting the ceremony to honor the community veterans. Also participating in the ceremony is Col Thomas Deppe, 341st Space Wing commander, and Bob Klein, Postal Service Big Sky District manager.

The "Honoring Veterans" stamp recognizes the vital and varied roles veterans have played to ensure peace, stop aggression and provide logistical support during crisis. More than 25 million Americans, or almost one in every 10 adults, are veterans.

Many veterans continue to serve their country, their fellow veterans and their communities as members of veterans service organizations.

These organizations provide aid to veterans and their families, and burial and memorial services. Local communities also benefit from the work of veterans service organizations through scholarship programs, youth sport activities and other programs designed to promote civic pride.

Designed by Carl Herrman of Carlsbad, Calif., the stamp features a photograph of the United States flag. The phrase "Honoring Veterans" appears at the top of the stamp, and the phrase "Continuing to Serve" appears at the bottom.

To see the "Honoring Veterans" stamp, and other forthcoming 2001 stamps and stationary, visit the Postal Store at www.usps.com, (select SHOP, the shop, the Postal Store, then Stamp Release Schedule. To see previous releases, select Index of Stamp Issues.)

(Courtesy of the Great Falls Postal Service.)

Panel, SES employees and major command representatives.

Executives and their supervisors will find the major changes incorporate balanced measures and standard performance elements. The latter change, while not strictly required by the new OPM regulations, was made to foster equity in performance review board consideration of SES employees for performance bonuses.

(Courtesy Air Force Space Command News Service.)